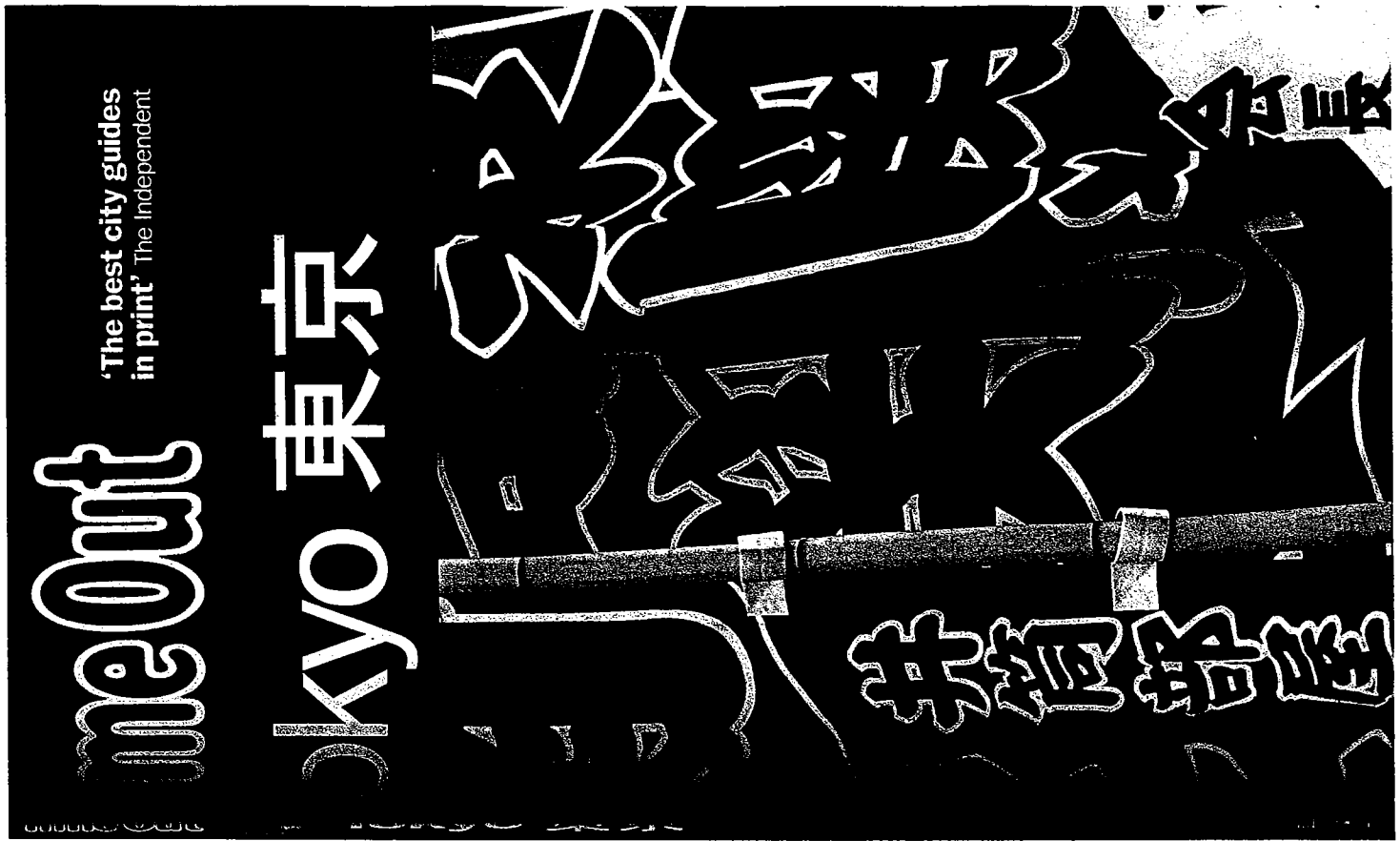


EXHIBIT A



Tokyo 東京

All Time Out Guides are written by a team of local experts, with a unique insider perspective. They contain comprehensive arts and cultural coverage, along with hundreds of independent reviews. For every destination, our critics identify the best, the worst, the most fashionable and the most overrated.

Time Out Tokyo guides you through the marvels and mysteries of one of the world's most enigmatic capitals. From futuristic skyscrapers to ancient temples, sex clubs to sushi bars, it's all here. Full-colour maps of key areas – with every destination of interest pinpointed – and detailed transport maps help you navigate the city with no street names.

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ISBN-10 1-904278-37-1 ISBN-13 978-1-904278-37-4	TIME OUT GUIDES	
	U.K. £12.99	
9 781904 978374	CAN \$26.00	
	U.S. \$19.95	



Cover photography
Michael Coster/Aslam

Getting into hot water

Godliness is next to cleanliness for the Japanese, and the country has a very long bathing tradition with its hot-spring baths (onsen) and public bathhouses (sento). To the foreigner, the two may seem similar – both involve stripping off and hopping into a communal tub with members of one's own sex – but there are distinct differences.

With very frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, Japan is no quiet spot geologically. The upside of this is the great number of hot springs, rich in mineral content and endowed with therapeutic benefits, which have led to the building of myriad bathing facilities. Outdoor *onsen* (*rotenburo*) can be a wonderful experience; there is nothing like bathing outside in winter, surrounded by snow and drinking sake from a flask heated by the water. **Hakone** (see p268-71), an hour from Tokyo, is a famous hot-springs resort area, but you can also experience *onsen* life in the heart of the city.

Sento (literally, 'penny baths') generally use ordinary heated tap water and were far more plentiful in the days when most Japanese houses didn't have their own baths. A visit to a *sento* (identified by a sign depicting what looks like flames coming out of a handleless frying pan) is a fine way of experiencing a slice of traditional Japanese life. Older *onsen* and *sento* are often housed in delightful buildings that are a throwback to a more leisurely age.

Most *sento* are strictly segregated by gender, but some *onsen* allow mixed bathing. Below we list some of Tokyo's top bathing spots. Don't expect English to be spoken.

BATHING ETIQUETTE

Having paid and entered the relevant changing room – signs are written only in *kanji*, so make sure you know the difference between 'men' and 'women' – strip off completely and put your clothes in a locker. Japanese usually proceed into the bathing area with a small towel; most people bring their own, but these can usually be rented. The most important aspect of the code of behaviour is that you enter the bath completely clean. Pull up a stool and bucket, choose a 'scrubbing station' and wash yourself thoroughly, removing every trace of soap or shampoo. Then get into the tub (there's often more than one). Never put your head underwater.

Sightseeing

Odaiba

The exterior is nothing special, but this is a genuine *onsen* not far from boisterous Roppongi, delivering brownish mineral waters (albeit artificially heated). There's also a *sento* (Koshi no Yu) and a steam sauna.

Oedo Onsen Monogatari

2-57 Omi, Koto-ku (5500 1126/
www.oedoonsen.jp). Telecom Center station (Yurikamome line). Open 11am-9am daily (last entry 2am). Admission 11am-6pm ¥2,800; after 6pm ¥1,900; staying past 2am extra charge ¥1,500. Map p113. This 'onsen theme park' in Odaiba (pictured) is one of three recently opened, large-scale *onsen* facilities in Tokyo; the others are LaQua in Tokyo Dome City (see p202) and Niwa no Yu in Toshimaen (see p121). It does a pretty good job of recreating an Edo-period bathhouse, with traditional snack and souvenir stalls and numerous bathing areas, indoor and out, plus hot sand baths and saunas. The price of admission includes yukata and towels.

Seta Onsen

4-15-30 Seta, Setagaya-ku (3707 8228/www.setaonsen.co.jp). Futako Tamagawa station (Tokyu Denentoshi, Tokyo Oinachi, Tokyo Shin-Tamagawa lines), then 10mins walk or shuttle bus. Open 10am-11pm daily. Admission ¥2,300. Another large-scale, family-friendly *onsen* in a lovely garden setting. There are indoor and open-air bathing areas, a sauna and restaurants. Swimsuits (which can be rented) must be worn in the 'garden healing pool'.

Sento

The price of all *sento* is set at a standard ¥400.

Aqua

4-9-22 Higashi-Nakano, Nakano-ku (5330 1126). Higashi-Nakano station (Chuo, Oedo lines), east exit. Open 3pm-midnight Tue-Sun. A modern *sento* with a variety of baths, including a *rotenburo* and sauna. Usefully, it stocks cold beers.

Daikoku-yu

32-6 Senju, Kotobuki-cho, Adachi-ku (3881 3001). Kita-Senju station (Chiyoda, Hibiya lines), west exit, then 15mins walk. Open 3pm-midnight Tue-Sun.

Sightseeing



This majestic, temple-like building is probably the most attractive *sento* in Tokyo. Serenely spacious, with its own *rotenburo*, it also has cold beer in stock.

Kompartu-yu

8-7-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku (3571 5469). Ginza station (Ginza, Hibiya lines), exit A2. Open 2-11pm Mon-Sat. Map p80. A few doors from Kyubei, one of Tokyo's most famous (and famously expensive) sushi restaurants, in ritzy Ginza is this tiny old bathhouse, which dates back to Edo days. There are two baths – *ataakai* (hot) and *nurui* (lukewarm); lukewarm is hot enough for most.

Shimizu-yu

3-12-3 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku (3401 4404). Omotesando station (Chiyoda, Ginza, Hanzonon lines), exit A4. Open 4pm-midnight Tue-Sun. Located in the heart of Omotesando.

Tamano-yu

1-13-7 Asagaya-Kita, Suginami-ku (3338 7860). Asagaya station (Chuo line), north exit. Open 3.30pm-1am Tue-Sun. A recently renovated, traditional *sento* with a number of novelty tubs, including a *derikiburo* (electric bath).

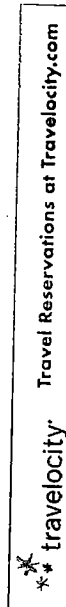


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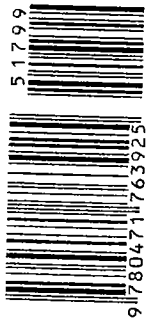
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and sweets. At **Toko-an**, on the fourth floor of the Imperial Hotel, 1-1-1 Uchisaiwai-cho, Chiyoda-ku (☎ 03/3504-1111; station: Hibiya, 1 min.), demonstrations are given from 10am to noon and 1 to 4pm Monday through Saturday except holidays. Reservations are required. The fee is ¥1,500 (\$14) for tea and sweets.

ACUPUNCTURE & SHIATSU Although most Westerners have heard of acupuncture, they may not be familiar with *shiatsu* (Japanese pressure-point massage). Most first-class hotels in Japan offer shiatsu in the privacy of your room. There are acupuncture clinics everywhere in Tokyo, and the staff of your hotel may be able to tell you of one nearby. As it's not likely the clinic's staff will speak English, it might be a good idea to have the guest relations officer at your hotel not only make the reservation but specify the treatment you want. Otherwise, English is spoken at **Yamate Acupuncture Clinic**, second floor of the ULS Nakameguro Building, 1-3-3 Higashi-yama, Meguro-ku (☎ 03-3792-8989; station: Nakameguro, 6 min.), open Monday to Friday 9am to 8pm and Saturday 9am to 2pm. It charges ¥3,000 (\$29) for a specific treatment or ¥5,000 (\$48) for the whole body, plus a ¥1,000 (\$9.50) initial fee. English is also spoken at **Tani Clinic**, third floor of the Taishoseimei Hibiya Building, 1-9-1 Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku (☎ 03/3201-5675; station: Hibiya, 1 min.), open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 9am to noon and 2 to 5pm and charging ¥10,500 (\$100) for the first visit, ¥6,300 (\$60) for each subsequent visit.

PUBLIC BATHS Tokyo has more than 1,000 *sentō* (public baths)—which may sound like a lot but is nothing compared to the 2,687 the city used to have in the 1970s. Easily recognizable by a tall chimney and shoe lockers just inside the door, a *sentō* sells just about anything you might need at the bathhouse—soap, shampoo, towels, even underwear.

For a unique bathing experience, nothing beats a 3- or 4-hour respite at the **Oedo-Onsen Monogatari**, 2-57 Aomi on Odaiba (☎ 03/5500-1126; station: Telecom Center Station, 2 min.), which tapped mineral-rich hot-spring waters 1,380m (4,600 ft.) below ground to supply this re-created Edo-era bathhouse village. After changing into a *yukata* (cotton kimono) and depositing your belongings in a locker (your key is bar-coded so there's no need to carry any money), you'll stroll past souvenir shops and restaurants on your way to massage rooms, sand baths (extra fee charged), and *onsen* (hot-spring baths) complete with outdoor baths, jacuzzi, steam baths, and saunas. Since as many as 6,500 bathers pour into this facility on weekends, try to come on a weekday, and since signs in English are virtually nonexistent, observe gender before entering bathing areas (a hint: women's baths usually have pink or red curtains, men's blue). Open daily 11am to 9am the next day. Admission is ¥2,827 (\$27) for adults and ¥1,570 (\$15) for children, with reduced prices after 6pm.

Not quite as colorful is the upscale **Spa LaQua**, 1-1-1 Kasuga (☎ 03/3817-4173; www.laqua.jp; station: Kasuga, 2 min.), located in the heart of Tokyo at Korakuen's Tokyo Dome City complex. It, too, has hot-spring indoor/outdoor baths, saunas, and massage options, but an adjoining amusement park with roller coasters (and screaming passengers) make this a less relaxing alternative. It's open daily 11am to 9am the next day, with admission priced at ¥2,565 (\$24) for adults and ¥1,785 (\$17) for children. Note that no children under 6 are allowed and no minors under 18 are allowed after 6pm.

ZAZEN A few temples in the Tokyo vicinity occasionally offer sitting meditation with instruction in English. Approximately 30 minutes east of Akihabara on the Sobu Line is **Ida Ryogoku-do Zazen Dojo** of the Sotoshu Sect, 5-1-1-20 Minami Yawata,

Ichikawa City (☎ 0473/79-1596; station: Moto-Yawata, 5 min.). Zazen is held daily at 5:30 and 10am and at 3 and 8:30pm, generally for 45 minutes (call to confirm times). A Dogen-Sangha meeting is held the fourth Saturday of the month from 1 to 2:30pm, consisting of 30 minutes for Zazen followed by a 1-hour lecture. Participation is free, and if you call from Moto-Yawata Station, someone will come for you. You can also stay here for longer periods to practice Zen; call Mr. Nishijima at ☎ 03/3435-0701 for more information. The **Young Men Buddhist Association of Tokyo University**, of the Sotoshu Sect, second floor of the Nippon Shimpan Building, 3-33-5 Hongo (☎ 03/3235-0701; station: Hongo-Sanchome, 3 min.), holds a Dogen-Sangha meeting the first, third, and fifth Saturday of each month from 1 to 2:30pm, which includes 30 minutes of Zazen and a 1-hour lecture in English. There's a ¥400 (\$3.80) fee. This one, too, allows long-term stays.

3 Parks & Gardens

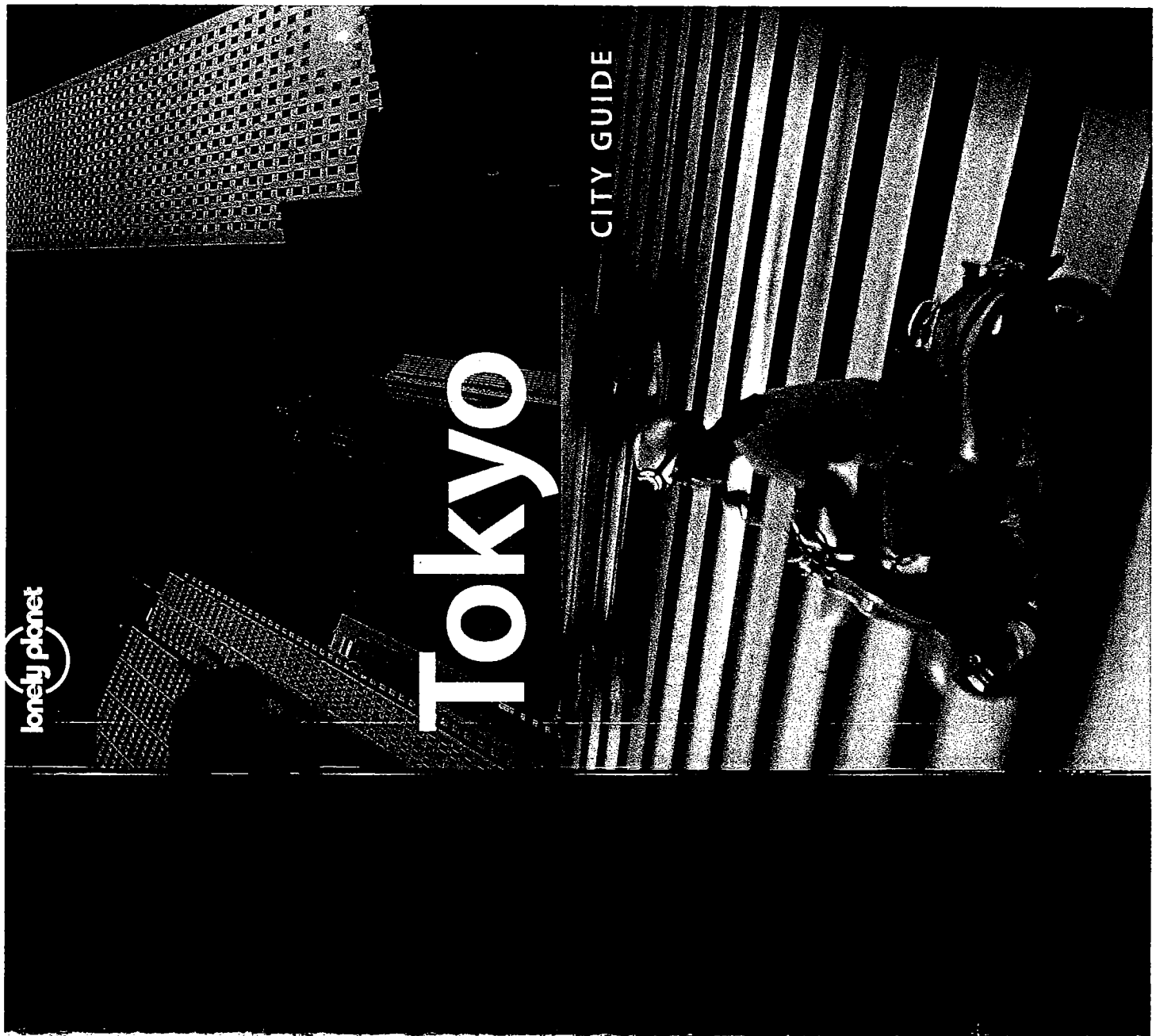
Although Japan's most famous gardens are not in Tokyo, most of the places listed below use principles of Japanese landscaping and give visitors at least an idea of the scope and style of these gardens.

East Garden (Higashi Gyoen) 東園 The 21 hectares (53 acres) of the formal Higashi Gyoen—once the main grounds of Edo Castle and located next to the Imperial Palace—are a wonderful respite in the middle of the city. Yet surprisingly, this garden is hardly ever crowded. **Ninomaru 二ノ丸**, my favorite part, is laid out in Japanese style with a pond, steppingstones, and winding paths; it's particularly beautiful when the wisteria, azaleas, irises, and other flowers are in bloom. Near Ninomaru is the **San-nomaru Shozokan**, with free changing exhibitions of art treasures belonging to the Imperial family.

On the highest spot of Higashi Gyoen is the **Honmaru** (inner citadel), where Tokugawa's main castle once stood. Built in the first half of the 1600s, the castle was massive, surrounded by a series of whirling moats and guarded by 23 watchtowers and 99 gates around its 16km (10-mile) perimeter. At its center was Japan's tallest building at the time, the five-story castle keep, soaring 50m (168 ft.) above its foundations and offering an expansive view over Edo. This is where Tokugawa Ieyasu would have taken refuge, had his empire ever been seriously threatened. Although most of the castle was a glimmering white, the keep was black with a gold roof, which must have been quite a sight in old Edo as it towered above the rest of the city. All that remains today of the shogun's castle are a few towers, gates, stone walls, moats, and the stone foundations of the keep.

1-1 Chiyoda, Chiyoda-ku. ☎ 03/3213-1111. Free admission. Mar-Oct Tues-Thurs and Sat-Sun 9am-4:30pm (enter by 4pm). Nov-Feb Tues-Thurs and Sat-Sun 9am-4pm (enter by 3:30pm). Closed Dec 23 and Dec 28-Jan 3; open other national holidays. Station: Ottemachi, Takebashi, or Nijubashi-mae.

Hama Rikyu Garden 庭園 Considered by some to be the best garden in Tokyo (but marred, in my opinion, by nearby buildings that detract from its charm), this peaceful oasis has origins stretching back 300 years, when it served as a retreat for a former feudal lord and as duck-hunting grounds for the Tokugawa shoguns. In 1871, possession of the garden passed to the Imperial family, who used it to entertain such visiting dignitaries as Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Come here to see how the upper classes enjoyed themselves during the Edo Period. Located on Tokyo Bay and surrounded by water on three sides, the garden contains an inner tidal pool, spanned by three bridges



HARA MUSEUM OF

CONTEMPORARY ART Map pp278-9

3445-0651; www.haramuseum.or.jp; 4-7-25 Kita-Shinagawa, Shinagawa-ku; adult ¥1000, student ¥500-700; 11am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 11am-8pm Wed; JR Yamanote Line to Shinagawa (Takanawa exit)

South of the city in Shinagawa, this museum is one of Tokyo's more adventurous art spaces. Given that exhibitions change often, it is a good idea to check what's on before making your way out here. The Bauhaus design and the café, which overflows into a delightful garden, are attractions in themselves.

HATAKEYAMA COLLECTION Map pp278-9

3447-5787; www.ehara.co.jp/socialactivity/hatakeyama/english; 2-20-12 Shirokanedai, Minato-ku; adult/student ¥500/300; 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar; Asakusa Line to Takanawadai (exit A2)

This undervisited museum should be high on the list for anyone with an interest in Japanese ceramics and the tea ceremony. It was the private collection of Hatakeyama Ise, an industrialist who dedicated himself to the way of tea and also designed the museum. You'll find seasonal displays of priceless works of tea ware from the Muromachi, Momoyama and Edo periods, some of them important cultural properties. The muted lighting in the exhibit hall seems inspired by the mock-up of a tea house in the corner (you can have tea hall for an additional ¥400). It's all reached via a lovely garden.

NIHON MINGEIKAN Map pp278-9

Japan Folk Crafts Museum; 3467-4527; www.mingeikan.or.jp/english; 4-3-33 Komaba, Meguro-ku; adult ¥1000, student ¥200-500; 10am-5pm Tue-Sun; Keio Inokashira Line to Komaba-tōdaimae

The collection of this lovely museum numbers some 17,000 pieces of *mingei* (called folk crafts but really a philosophy, p23). Most of the work is from Japan, but there are also pieces from Europe, Africa and other Asian countries. No surprise that the museum's pioneers were Yanagi Sōetsu, Hamada Shōji and Kawai Kanjiro, three of the leaders of the *mingei* movement itself: the impressive building (1936) was Yanagi's house. In addition to changing exhibits of *mingei*, the museum also sponsors an annual competition of new works.

TOYOTA MEGA WEB Map p289

3599-0808; www.megaweb.gr.jp; 1 Aomi, Kōto-ku; admission free, virtual test drives ¥600; 11am-9pm; Yurikamome Line to Aomi (main exit), or Rinkai Line to Tokyo Teleport (main exit) in the Palette Town development, Mega Web was designed to display the wares of the Toyota corporation. Yes, it's a showroom, but against all odds it's actually also fun. Test drive vehicles (advance reservation required), try the Mega Theater motion simulator or poke around in the History Garage with cars from the Golden Age. Some facilities close earlier; call ahead to confirm. Next door, don't miss the world's tallest Ferris wheel (Dai-karansha), as high as the second viewing platform of the Eiffel Tower (Paris).

OTHER SIGHTS

GHIBLI MUSEUM Map pp278-9

general information 0570-055777, tickets 0570-000777; www.ghibli-museum.jp/ticket_info.html; 1-1-83 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka-shi; adult ¥1000, child ¥100-700; 10am-6pm Wed-Mon; Tōzai or JR Chitō Line to Mitaka (south exit) When you saw *Spirited Away* by Miyazaki Hayao (or *Princess Mononoke*, *Howl's Moving Castle*, *My Neighbor Totoro* and so on) you probably fell in love with its mythical themes, fanciful characters and outrageous landscapes. So did every kid in Japan, which means you need to arrange tickets long before you arrive at this museum of the work of Ghibli, Miyazaki's animation studio.

Galleries walk you through the process of animation from concept to screen (English-speaking docents are usually on hand). Other highlights include a zoetrope presentation of a half-dozen Ghibli characters in motion, a minitheatre presenting short films (in Japanese but usually easy enough to follow), 5m worth of robot from the *Castle in the Sky* in a garden on the roof, and a gift shop with exclusive themed merchandise (though much of it at exclusive prices). Special exhibits change annually. To top off the visit, every visitor is given an original frame from one of Miyazaki's films.

From Mitaka Station, follow the signposted walk along the Tamagawa Waterworks for 15 minutes to Inokashira Park, and turn right. Alternatively, a community bus (one way/return ¥200/300, approximately every 10 minutes) goes directly to the museum from the Mitaka Station.

MIRAikan Map p289

National Museum of Emerging Science & Innovation; 3570-9151; www.miraikan.jp

2-41 Aomi, Kōto-ku; adult/child ¥500/200; 10am-5.30pm Wed-Sun; Yurikamome Line to Fune-no-kagakukan or Telecom Center in the 20th century, '2001' had overtones of the future. 'Miraikan' means 'hall of the future', so it's somehow fitting that that's the year this futuristic building opened. It's been a favourite for travellers with kids ever since. Robotics (check out Asimo), home and automotive technology figure prominently, as do the newest in space and the life sciences. The Gaia planetarium, in its own orb, almost always books out – get a reservation ticket when you arrive. The building itself is as futuristic as its exhibits; glass of different degrees of clarity has been used for different parts of the exterior shell, to allow for capture of natural light, and 'through holes' and 'wind gardens' provide ventilation.

Ō-EDO ONSEN MONOGATARI Map p289

5500-1126; 2-57 Aomi, Kōto-ku; adult ¥1575-2827, child ¥840-1575; 11am-9am; Yurikamome Line to Telecom Center, or Rinkai Line to Tokyo Teleport (free shuttle bus)

Public bathing in *onsen* (hot springs) is a Japanese obsession (see p170), and believe it or not they've managed to find an actual hot spring 1400m below this giant complex. Bathing opportunities (most separated by gender) include indoor and outdoor pools, a foot bath, a bed of hot stones, and the opportunity to be buried in hot sand. Massage services are available, as are relaxation spaces in case all that pampering makes you sleepy. Bathing products and rental of towels and *yukata* (light cotton kimono) are included.

It's more than just hot springs, though. Like the food theme parks around town Onsen Monogatari has re-created an old Japanese downtown indoors, selling old-timey foods, toys and souvenirs. Wander around in your colourful *yukata* and you'll fit right in. Sure it's kitschy, but what the hey... Note: Discounts are available if you arrive late at night or early in the morning; admission prices are highest between 11am and 6pm, and lowest between 5am and 8am. Visitors with tattoos will be denied admission.

clear days provides a glimpse of majestic Mt Fuji in the distance. Mega malls like Aqua City Odaiba, Decks Tokyo Beach (p188) and Venus Fort (p188) dominate the rest of the landscape, with heaps of shopping, theme dining and game arcades.

Across the flats, the science museum Miraikan, the Museum of Maritime Science and Ō-edo Onsen Monogatari are all excellent alternatives.

Orientation

Most of Odaiba is navigable by foot, though jumping on and off the Yurikamome Line train can be wonderfully convenient. The western part of the island, fronted by Odaiba Marine Park, is home to luxury hotels, shopping and arcades and a great number of eateries. The museums and other attractions generally lie to the east.

MUSEUM OF MARITIME SCIENCE

Map p289

Fune no Kagaku-kan; 5500-1111; www.funeno-kagakukan.or.jp/english/index.html; 3-1 Higashi Yashio, Shinagawa-ku; adult/child ¥700/400;

Yurikamome Line to Fune-no-kagakukan This museum is ship-shape, literally.

From the outside it looms like an ocean liner by the water's edge, and inside are four floors of excellent displays related to every aspect of ships; don't miss the stunningly crafted replicas of Japanese ships, or try the navigation simulator.

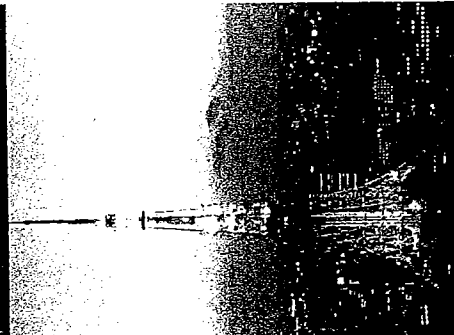
Outside, the 83.7m icebreaker Sōya is preserved. The museum is full of activities for kids, including a pool next door used for swimming and demonstrations and instruction of small craft. There's limited English signage but an English audio guide is available (¥500).

TRANSPORT

Train Odaiba is on the Yurikamome Line from Shinjuku, which crosses the majestic 918m-long Rainbow Bridge. An 800-day pass makes sense unless you plan to make a simple round trip. The Rinkai Line also approaches from the south and east. Waterbus: The Suiko bus stops at Ōdaiba Marine Park and Palmetto. Catch the waterbus (see Shimoda-gawa River (p186, p87) from Hinode Pier (Map pp278-9)



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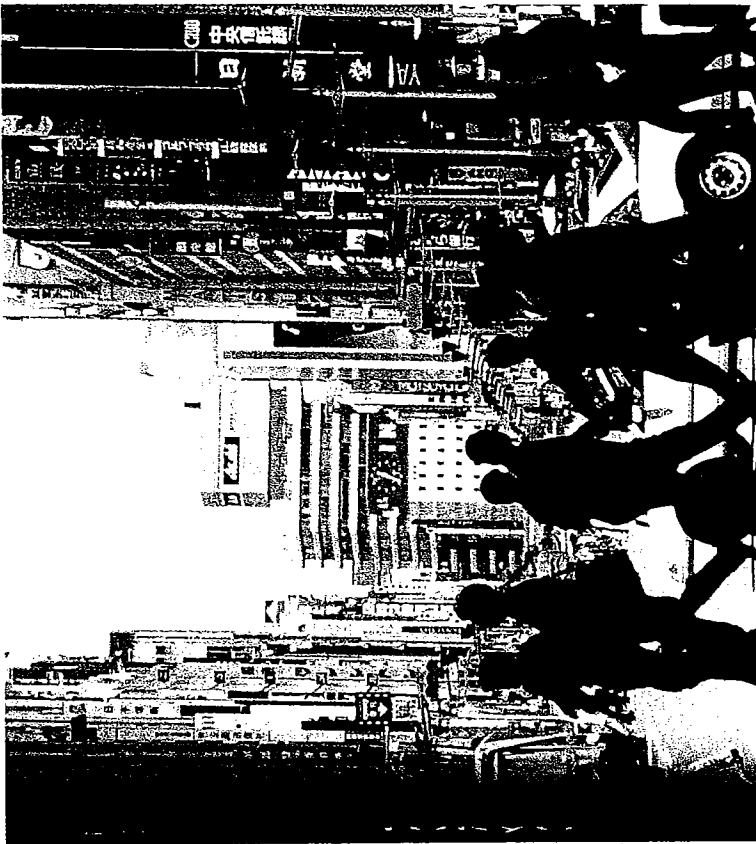
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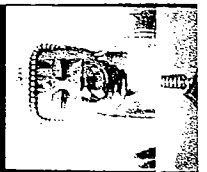
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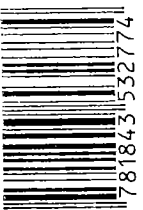
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Hall of Fame and Museum (Tues-Sun 10am-5pm, March-Sept until 6pm; ¥400; @www.baseball-museum.or.jp) is for diehard fans only, who'll appreciate the footage of early games and all sorts of baseball memorabilia, including one of Babe Ruth's jackets.

On the west side of the site is the recently upgraded **LaQua** amusement park (daily 10am-10pm; @www.laqua.jp). The highlight is **Thunder Dolphin** (¥1000), a high-tech rollercoaster guaranteed to get you screaming. If you haven't got the stomach for it the world's first spokeless ferris wheel (¥800) provides a gentler ride and plenty of time to take a photo of the passing view. The **hockey 13 Doors** (¥800), a Japanese house of horrors, also provides some ghoulish laughs. A one-day passport (¥4000; or ¥2800 after 5pm) gets you access to all the park's rides. Alternatively, skip the rides and soak away your stress at the excellent **Spa LaQua** (see opposite).

Immediately to the west of Tokyo Dome is **Koishikawa-Kōrakuen** (daily 9am-5pm; ¥300), a fine example of an early seventeenth-century stroll-garden. Winding paths take you past waterfalls, ponds and stone lanterns down to the shores of a small lake draped with gnarled pines and over daintily humped bridges, where each view replicates a famous beauty spot. **Zhu Shun Shui**, a refugee scholar from Ming China, advised on the design, so Chinese as well as Japanese landscapes feature, the most obvious being **Small Lu-shan**, represented by rounded hills of bamboo grass. The garden attracts few visitors, though intrusive announcements from Tokyo Dome, looming over the trees, mean it's not always totally peaceful. The main entrance gate lies in the garden's southwest corner, midway between **Suidōbashi** and **Idabashi** stations; there's another entrance close by **Tokyo Dome**.

From **Suidōbashi** hop on the **Toei Mita** subway one stop, or walk 1km south down **Hakusan-dōri** to **Jimbōchō**, a lively student centre which is also home to dozens of secondhand **bookshops** around the intersection of **Yasukuni-dōri** and **Hakusan-dōri**. The best ones are along the south side of **Yasukuni-dōri** in the blocks either side of **Jimbōchō** subway station, where racks of dog-eared novels and textbooks sit outside shops stacked high with dusty tomes. Most of these are in Japanese, but some dealers specialize in English-language books – both new and old – while a bit of rooting around might turn up a volume of old photographs or cartoons in one of the more upmarket antiquarian dealers. Note that many shops close on either Sunday or Monday.

Ryōgoku and around

From **Akihabara**, hop on a **Sōbu**-line train two stops west across the **Sumidagawa** to **Ryōgoku**, a sort of sumo town with shops selling outside clothes and restaurants serving flavourful tureens of *chanko-nabe*, the wrestlers' traditional body-building stew. Three times each year major sumo tournaments fill the **National Sumo Stadium**, outside **Ryōgoku** Station's west exit, with a two-week pageant of thigh-slapping, foot-stamping and arcane ritual (see p.192 for more on sumo and buying tickets). The one-room historical **museum** (Mon-Fri 10am-4.30pm; closed during tournaments; free) beside the stadium is for diehard fans only; better to simply wander the streets immediately south of the train tracks. Until recently, this area housed many of the major "stables" where wrestlers lived and trained, but rising land prices have forced most of them out. Nevertheless, there's still a good chance of bumping into some

Tokyo onsen and spas

Until just a few decades ago, when people began installing bathrooms at home, life in Tokyo's residential neighbourhoods focused round the **sentō**, the public bath. Though you no longer find them few blocks, a surprising number of bathhouses survive, of which we've given a sampler below. Take along your own soap, shampoo and a towel – or buy them at the door. See p.40 for tips on bathing etiquette.

The **sentō** have been recently joined by a couple of enormous **onsen** (hot spring) complexes: **Spa LaQua** in **Suidōbashi** and **Oedo Onsen Monogatari** in **Odaiba**. Both are much more expensive than a traditional **sentō** but offer extensive bathing facilities, a range of places to eat and relaxation areas with very comfortable reclining chairs.

Asakusa Kannon Onsen 2-7-26 Asakusa, Taitō-ku @03/3844-4141 (daily 6.30am-6pm; ¥700); **Asakusa Station**. This big, old ivy-covered bathhouse isn't the cheapest **sentō** around, but it's right next to **Sensō-ji** and uses real onsen water. The clientele ranges from *yakuza* to grannies – very *Asakusa*.

Azabu-Jūban Onsen 1-5-22 Azabu-Jūban, Minato-ku @03/3404-2610 (daily except Tues); **Azabu-Jūban Station**. Of the two options here, the casual ground-floor baths (3-11pm; ¥400) offer better value, while upstairs (11am-9pm; ¥1260, or ¥940 after 6pm) is a much classier affair. Either way, the brown, mineral-rich onsen water is scalding hot. **Jakotsu-yu** 1-11-11 Asakusa, Taitō-ku @03/3841-8641 (daily except Tues 1pm-midnight; ¥400); **Tawaramachi Station**. Spruce bathhouse down a back alley just south of **Rox** department store – one bath is designed to give you a mild but stimulating electric shock. Each section has a small rock garden and a handy coin laundry in the changing room.

Oedo Onsen Monogatari 2-57 Omi, Koto-ku @03/5500-1126, @www.oedoonsen.jp (daily 11am-9pm; ¥2872, or ¥1987 after 6pm); **Telecom Centre Station**. More of a theme park than a bathhouse, this newly developed onsen on the southwestern edge of **Odaiba** goes in for nostalgic kitsch in a big way. Admission includes a colourful *yukata* and towels. There's an outdoor bath and various street performers keep the atmosphere jolly.

Rokuryū Mineral Spa 3-4-20 Ikenohata, Bunkyo-ku @03/3821-3826 (Tues-Sun 3.30-11pm; ¥400); **Nezu Station**. Another real onsen bath boasting a lovely traditional-style frontage. The interior is more ordinary, but clean and spacious.

Spa LaQua 1-1-1 Kasuga, Bunkyo-ku @03/3817-4173, @www.laqua.jp (daily 11am-9pm; ¥2300); **Suidōbashi Station**. By far the most sophisticated of Tokyo's bathing complexes, this new place spread over five floors (the entrance is on the 6th floor) uses real onsen water pumped from 1700m underground. Admission includes towels and loose pyjamas to wear around the complex. Access to the **Healing Baden** set of special therapeutic saunas costs ¥300 extra. It's also a great place to pass the time if you miss the last train home and don't want to fork out for a capsule or hotel.

Tokyo onsens and spas

Asakusa Kannon Onsen	Asakusa Kannon Onsen	浅草観音温泉
Azabu-Jūban Onsen	Azabu-Jūban Onsen	麻布十番温泉
Jakotsu-yu	Jakotsu-yu	蛇骨湯
Oedo Onsen Monogatari	Oedo Onsen Monogatari	大江戸温泉物語
Rokuryū Mineral Spa	Rokuryū Kōsen	六龍鉱泉
Spa LaQua	Spa Rakuwa	スパラクワ

junior wrestlers in their *yukata* and wooden *geta* with slicked-back hair, popping out to a store or for a quick snack of *chanko-nabe*. If you're feeling peckish yourself, one of the best places to sample this traditional sumo hotpot packed with tofu and vegetables is **Tomogata** restaurant (see p.159).